

HMNS Statement to Parents/Guardians Regarding 2020-2021 Weekday Lab Operations

The health and safety of our patrons is always our first priority. The HMNS Weekday Lab program has extensive health and safety procedures in place every year. This school-year, in light of COVID-19, HMNS Youth Education is updating these procedures extensively, informed by current recommendations from local, state, federal health officials, agencies, and authorities, including CDC guidelines. The modifications include:

Social Distancing and Crowd Limitations

- Conducting each lab in a double-classroom with spaced seating.
- Reducing the number of staff per classroom to one teacher and up to three parent assistants – all other parents will need to wait outside the classroom and stay socially distant.
- No more than three students per classroom table.
- Teachers and assistants will remind students to remain separate.
- Individualized projects and activities.
- Only students, up to three parent assistants and staff will be allowed in the classrooms. Floor decals will indicate 6-foot spacing for parents to queue outside each classroom for drop off and pick up.
- Museum staff will monitor all public spaces to facilitate social distancing; and have installed signage and floor decals throughout the facility to encourage and remind visitors to practice social distancing and hand washing and sanitizing.
- Seating outside of the museum's restaurants has been removed, and eating outside the Butterfly Center, in Hermann Park, or offsite is encouraged.

Health Monitoring

- The temperature of all employees will also be measured before entering the museum; any employees exhibiting a fever of 100.4 or above will be sent home. Upon entering the building, employees must wash or sanitize their hands. The museum is also putting extensive health maintenance requirements in place for employees to follow throughout the day.

Cleaning and Sanitization

- Upon entering the museum, patrons are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands.
- Patrons are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands often throughout the day.
- All staff who engage with students will wear face masks.
- All patrons above 10 years old are required to wear a face mask in order to enter the museum.
- All younger students will be encouraged to wear face masks. Cloth face masks will be available to purchase at the museum.
- The museum has installed more hand sanitizing stations and instituted heightened cleaning protocols, including frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection of “high-touch” door handles, elevators, and restrooms.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day.
- Students will be asked to wipe down their personal area with sanitizing wipes at the beginning and end of their class.
- Teachers will sanitize surfaces and handles in the classroom at the beginning and end of the class.
- The museum is implementing cleanliness “patrols” in all exhibition galleries and other public areas. These patrols will clean and sanitize all public surfaces in the museum frequently throughout each day.
- Hands-on exhibition components and other “high touch” experiences will remain closed, including certain theatre experiences and interactives in the Wiess Energy Hall, docent touch carts and more.
- Students are encouraged not to share personal electronic devices.
- In order to create a “low touch” classroom environment, we will eliminate touch items from the room.

Staff Training

- All museum staff have been trained on all operational changes the museum is implementing.

General modifications for HMNS are available for review on the Museum's Health and Safety page here: <http://www.hmns.org/visit/health-and-safety/>. We will continue to be informed by local, state, federal, and CDC guidelines and make necessary operational modifications as needed. The HMNS Youth Education staff will continue working non-stop to develop additional protocols and procedures that prioritize the health and safety of our participants.

In addition, HMNS Youth Education will be offering a selection of virtual lab options for those who may not feel comfortable returning to the museum in-person. A set schedule for virtual class offerings that may be referenced here: <http://www.hmns.org/education/families/virtual-individual-lab-registration/>. If the current health situation worsens, and we were no longer able to meet in-person, HMNS would utilize this virtual format to continue offering our labs.

We are looking forward to providing your students with fun, engaging, and educational programs in a healthy and safe environment. We hope you all are staying safe and taking good care of yourselves, and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

Sincerely,

The HMNS Youth Education Team